

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 8, 9, 13 and 14 are amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration is respectively requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments clarify an issue previously raised during prosecution; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary.

Claims 1, 8, 9, 13 and 14 have been amended for clarity purposes. The amended claims recite, *inter alia*, that "the status identifier that identifies **a process step associated with the document or document set**," as addressed in greater detail below. Support for the amendment may be found throughout the original specification and claims. For example, specific support may be found in the original specification at least at page 12, line 3 through page 13, line 6; page 14, lines 4-12; page 15, lines 3-21; page 24, lines 18-25. Page 25, lines 10-14; page 25, lines 20-26; and Fig. 2, Fig. 3B; and Fig. 12.

I. Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 and 7-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0177111 A1 to Egendorf et al. ("Egendorf") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,946,689 to Yanaka et al. ("Yanaka"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites a document integrated management apparatus that performs integrated management on plural documents stored in plural databases that includes "a linkage information management unit that stores and manages linkage information among documents stored in the plural databases or document sets each having one or more

documents as documents related to each other . . . a document information management unit that stores and manages document information on the document sets. . . wherein the linkage information and the document information are linked to each other. . . **based on [a] status identifier that identifies a process step associated with the document or document set.**

As described in the specification at page 12, line 3 through page 13, line 6 and as depicted in Fig. 2, a document set includes "one or more necessary documents used at each step in a defined process" (e.g., see page 12, lines 17-19). Further, as stated at page 14, lines 9-12 and as depicted in Fig. 2, the described invention stores and managed attribute data that includes a "status field" that describes a "position in the process steps."

As described at page 15, lines 3-21; page 24, lines 18-25; page 25, lines 10-14; page 25, lines 20-26; and as described with respect to Fig. 2; Fig. 3B; and Fig. 12, a user may generate a process step specific document, or document set, by specifying attribute data that includes a status identifier that identifies a specific step in a process. In response, the document integration management apparatus may extract a document, or document set, from the plurality of databases that includes documents selected and formatted to meet the needs of a user at the user specific "step in a defined process."

Neither Egendorf nor Yanaka discloses or suggests such a feature, nor would such a feature have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. Therefore, even if combined, the Egendorf or Yanaka would not teach the combinations of features recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references. Claims 8, 9, 13 and 14 include features similar to the feature described above with respect to claim 1 and are, therefore, patentably distinguishable over the cited references at least for the reasons addressed above with respect to claim 1. Claims 2-5, 7 and 10-12 and 11 depend from independent claims 1 8, 9, 13 and 14, respectively, and are

likewise patentably distinguishable over the applied art for at least their dependence on allowable base claims, as well as for additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-5 and 7-14 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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